Design Sense

A newsletter on Packaging, Product Styling, Store Planning and Merchandising trends
Lippincott & Margulies, Inc., Industrial Designers, 430 Park Avenue, New York
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THESE ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS — PACKAGE RESEARCH CAN HELP YOU SELL THEM

When it began, "package research" was involved with drop-testing a corrugated shipping container -- or determining the precise point at which a paper bag tears.

Today, package research, properly applied, can establish considerably more than the simple, but essential, facts of package strength.

It can determine with some precision the impact of package design on the minds of customers. Scientific techniques -- already in existence -- help to eliminate guesswork, hunch and personal taste as major determinants of package design, and can help to tell in advance which design is likely to do a better selling job in advertising and on a supermarket shelf.

Because this is the newest frontier of marketing, there are still many unresolved questions, many areas where opinions conflict, much work that goes on unnoticed despite its direct importance to marketing executives.

To bring together the currently available knowledge of how research can be applied to package design, Lippincott & Margulies has sponsored the First Annual Package Research Conference to be held at New York's Hotel Plaza, May 21st and 22nd.

Here, in one place and at one time, science and sales will meet as a working group. Here will be assembled many of the people whose past efforts in the field of research will, we believe, affect the future packaging of many products.

Clearly, the implications of this conference may well influence the future of every manufacturer with a stake in selling consumers.

For those in Management concerned with advertising, marketing and sales, this Conference should prove profitable -- in the broadest sense of the word.

This issue of Design Sense touches on some of the areas of package research which will be explored in greater detail at the upcoming Package Research Conference.

These are some vital marketing questions...

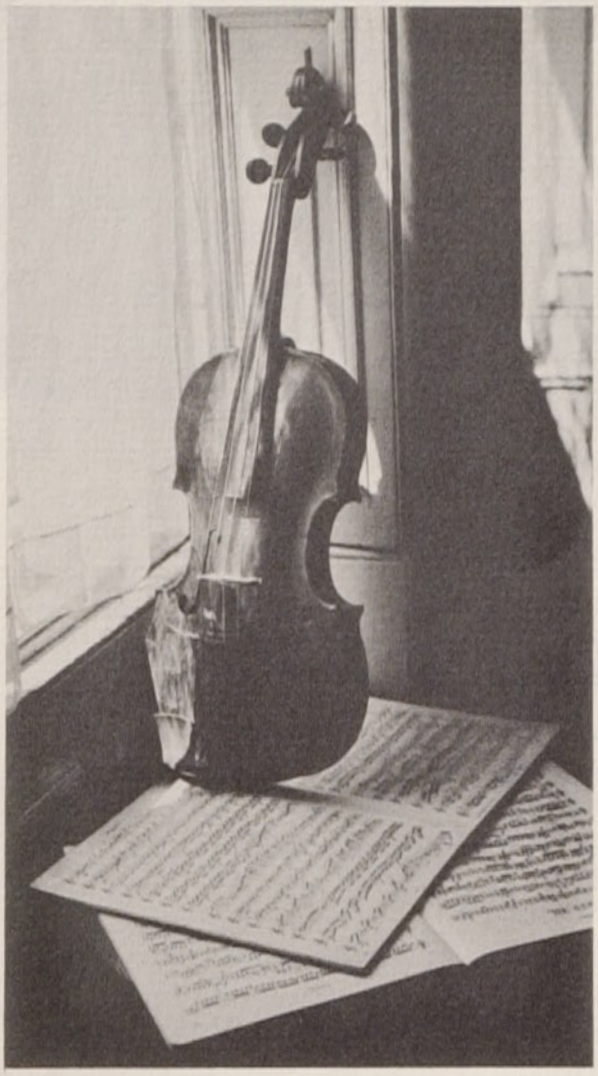
package research can help provide the answers

WHICH PACKAGE CONTAINS THE COFFEE? Can you single out which of these packages contains the coffee? Do you know for sure which one has the rice, the salt, the cake mix, the detergent? In the absence of brand or product name what clues do you -- and your customers -- look for in order to decide what a package contains? One research project under way right now is using packages like this to determine the relative importance of size, shape, color and pattern in product identification.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERYTHING LOOKS GOOD? Appetite appeal, and the implied guarantee that the finished cake will be a success are tried and true emotional factors which come into play when a housewife chooses a cake mix. But what happens when a four-color photograph of a mouth-watering cake begins to appear on virtually all cake mix packages? Under these conditions on what basis does the housewife make her selection? What fresh, new packaging idea can break through the "alikeness" of these packages?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO DOT AN "I"? At first glance, these two Parliament packages may look the same. But look again. On the package at the top (dummy package) the "i" has been dotted with a dot. Below (actual package) the "i" is dotted with a "V" shape, echoing the emblem or brandmark above it. Coincidentally or not, this repetition conforms to established psychological information about human behavior and to valid theories about human perception. Repetition of the motif helps the consumer identify the brand. In testing designs for the new Parliament package, researcher Louis Cheskin discovered that the package which repeated the "V" motif in the dotted "i", scored considerably higher in recognition.

IS HALF A LOAF SOMETIMES BETTER THAN THE WHOLE? Just as sentences which end by trailing off in a series of dots.....can sometimes be more meaningful than the completed thought, the human mind tends to remember best the visual form which is almost, but not quite, complete. The mind subconsciously goes on to close the gap -- to finish the design -- and this subconscious effort acts to reinforce the memory. On the rice package shown here, the right side of the plate is cut off at the edge of the package. As a result, the package itself is made more memorable. Research applied to this package -- or to yours -- can establish the value of devices like this.



IS IT ALWAYS WISE TO MODERNIZE YOUR PACKAGE? If yours is one of the older packages -- a package that successfully expressed the personality of your product and your company, or one which is firmly established on the American scene -- change might prove disastrous. After all, why redesign a violin?

This is one of the uncomfortable questions the designer faces frequently. Perhaps the package is "right" the way it is. Package research can give the answer -- can weight package familiarity against the considerations of new design treatment -- and by doing so avoid a mistake that might well prove disastrous.

HOW COSTLY IS INNOVATION? New products are the lifeblood of a growing corporation, but each year the cost of promoting a new product is going up and the fatalities can be staggering.

In 1956, Colgate-Palmolive Company's profits were down and, according to Forbes magazine, it was not due to any lack of earnings on Colgate's traditional lines but rather to the extraordinary expenditure of $12,000,000 to promote three new products -- Colgate's Brisk (fluoride toothpaste), Liquid Vel and Ad (short for Advanced Detergent).

Forbes reports Brisk as "an expensive failure." We wonder what percentage of the $12,000,000 was spent on package research, if any.

How would you rate this company for service?

Even a moving company can have a corporate look

PACKAGE RESEARCH AND THE "CORPORATE LOOK"

Whether you mine coal. . run a railroad. . or operate a fleet of moving vans. . you have a "packaging problem." The "package" is you. Your company. For as surely as "My Sin" perfume suggests a clandestine affair, the sight of your company name can evoke an image in the mind of the viewer.

The image is the "corporate look" -- the visual manifestation of your corporate personality, based on the totality of the impressions the corporation makes on the viewing public.

The question is -- is the image evoked by your corporate look the right image? If not, what is the right image? In either case, how can we be sure?

Because the corporate look is based largely on visual impressions the answers to these questions lie in the realm of research -- the same kind of research as that applied to packaging. Just as we are now able to determine which box of cake mix is likely to prove a better salesman on the supermarket shelf, so we are able, through visual research, to determine what image is evoked by the sight of your corporate name and the visible manifestations of the corporation's activities.

Achieving a successful corporate look cannot be done overnight. It is no job for amateurs -- nor is it, unfortunately, something that can be accomplished simply by changing the style of type used on a company's executive stationery. It calls for long-range, cohesive, top-level management planning. It involves every area of corporate operations. It takes into account not only the visual impression left

by the sight of the company's logotype or brandmark, but the impression on the viewer of the corporation's packages, advertising and promotion literature, calling cards, exhibits, offices -- even the colors used on the company's equipment.

Although few companies today have achieved a completely successful corporate look, increasing numbers of them are becoming aware of the problem. They know their company's image is one thing to management, something else to employees -- and something completely different to the general public. And they are aware that this is somehow undesirable.

Motivation studies already completed have indicated just how undesirable the lack of a well-defined, favorable image can be. They show that when the image of a company is ambiguous or hazy, the consumer is likely to harbor an innate distrust of the company -- and, by extension, the company's products -- for the simple, human reason that he doesn't know "who they are", or "what kind of people" he is dealing with. This holds true no matter whether the corporation involved is a bank, a railroad or an insurance company. People feel more secure, and are more likely to do business with companies whose "corporate look" is a favorable one.

In sum, when all the impressions of a company have been channelled into a common, favorable, unique visual image, the corporate look is a successful one. When the impressions are weak, diffused and lack cohesiveness, the result is an image that, at best, is not as effective as it might be; at worst, one that evokes a negative, "no sale" response.

Future issues of Design Sense will discuss in detail the problems involved in achieving a corporate look, and suggest some solutions.

From the Wall Street Journal April 5, 1957

"Today's query for corporation presidents: Does your company have "visual identity?"

In other words, do your buildings, your letterheads, your office decorations, your reports to stockholders, your trademarks, your ads, and your products themselves picture you and only you in the public eye?

If they don't, you may be at a competitive disadvantage...."

Will he love you in December, 1980, as he does in May, 1957?

In addition to being able to out-run, out-talk, out-maneuver and generally out-last us adults, today's children also seem to be able to out-remember us when it comes to brand identification.

We ran across this remarkable phenomenon in our own un-remarkable children. Their ability to identify brands seemed fantastic. We also observed that even before they could read, their brand loyalties seemed well established. This was particularly apparent during family shopping trips when we tried to interest them in a breakfast food "without the Lone Ranger on it."

We decided to investigate further this question of brand perception, brand loyalty and package identification in early childhood. We were not the first to do this: we since learned that evidence supplied by research had already suggested that brand loyalties formed in childhood very often lasted into adulthood. (See Box)

First, we conducted some preliminary tests to see whether the reactions of our own children toward brands was normal. It was. In the wide range of children we tested (ages 4 to 12) there was an astonishing knowledge of brand names and symbols. This seemed to be based largely on visual identification: children who could not read were fully as capable of identi-

fying brands as the older ones who could. We were also surprised to find that children, as a group, seemed much more aware of new products in some fields than a limited group of adults also tested.

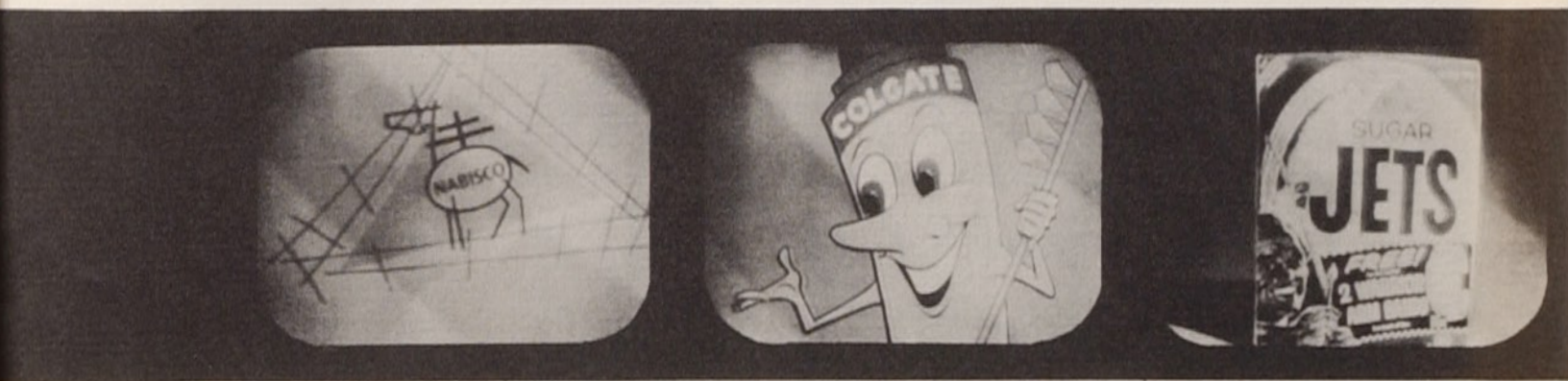
Impressed by the significance of these findings to marketing people, we talked to a research group at Teachers' College, Columbia University. They, in turn, became interested, launched a study in their Department of Early Childhood into the whole question of the way children react to consumer advertising and packaging.

This study is still in its early stages. But already it is becoming clear that certain symbols are very firmly established in the child's mind at nursery school age. One very young child, for instance, who certainly could have had no concept of what either electricity or the General Electric Company is, was able not only to point to the General Electric "brandmark" (the circled "G. E."), but to pick it out from the logotype with a proud, "This is General Electric."

Future studies in this Teachers' College project will probe such factors as the child's preference for shapes; abstractions vs. realism; the importance of animation; transferrence of association from television screen to shopping or "in use" situations; and the comparative effectiveness of brandmarks directed specifically toward children as compared with those intended for adults.

Obviously, this study -- and others along similar lines -- will be of major importance to advertising, marketing and sales executives in scores of U. S. companies. We'll keep you informed.

BRAND LOYALTY IN CHILDHOOD Evidence that brand loyalties formed early in life are important to later consumer behavior is supplied by Dr. Lester Guest of the Council of Research at Pennsylvania State University. He measured the brand preferences of public school students of various ages. He studied them again, 12 years later. There was, Dr. Guest reports, "a rather high degree of loyalty towards brand names" over this period of time.



Some of the test materials being used in studying the effects of brandmarks on children. Note the various uses of the package: The Colgate tube personified; the Nabisco symbol animated as a galloping horse; in the case of Sugar Jets, the package itself becomes the brandmark.

RESEARCH HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE UNIVERSITIES

Are you making use of findings like these?

DOES FAMILIARITY BREED VISUAL CONTEMPT? Some recent research by Dr. R. L. McFarland, Chief, Clinical Psychology Section, VA Research Hospital, Chicago, indicates that people tend to ignore seeing the simple, familiar, everyday objects in their surroundings. Instead, they tend to look for objects which are unfamiliar, more complicated.

Packaging Application: This is an area where studied non-conformity may pay off at the cash register. At the very least, it is reason enough for continuous review and re-appraisal of package designs.

HOW MANY TRIANGLES MAKE A GOOD PARATROOPER? Dr. James Miller of the University of Michigan tells of a film used during the war to determine if a man would make a good paratrooper, by testing whether he was color-oriented or shape-oriented. The film showed an abstract collage of colors and shapes. If the man said he saw colors moving to the left, it indicated he was color-oriented. If he said he saw squares and triangles moving to the left it meant he was shape-oriented. Shape oriented men were more intelligent, more stable, less emotional.

Packaging Application: Perhaps for those products which evoke negative emotions, we should play down color and play up shape in package design.

WHAT ABOUT PACKAGE COPY? A University of Minnesota study reveals that words arranged in what they call "square pan" style -- i. e. in short, two-line boxes -- are significantly easier to read than normal writing.

Packaging Application:

Should we	"square pan"	on labels
begin to	all our copy	and packages?

WHO'S WHO AT THE PACKAGE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

LOUIS CHESKIN, Director, Color Research Institute.

DR. THOMAS E. COFFIN, Director of Research, National Broadcasting Company.

DR. ERNEST DICHTER, President of the Institute for Motivational Research.

SHERWOOD DODGE, Vice President and National Marketing Director of Foote, Cone and Belding, Inc.

ROBERT F. ELRICK, President of Elrick and Lavidge, Inc., Marketing, Planning and Research consultants.

DR. HERBERT FISHER, Director of Market Potentials, J. Walter Thompson Company.

A. W. HARDING, Manager of Market Analysis Department, General Mills, Inc.

DR. MYRON J. HELFGOTT, Conference Director, Research Consultant, formerly Director of Research at Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, Inc.

ARNO H. JOHNSON, Vice President and Senior Economist of J. Walter Thompson Company.

BARBARA KAYE, Senior Project Director, Market Planning Corp., affiliate of McCann-Erickson, Inc.

ALBERT KNER, Director of the Design Laboratories of the Container Corporation of America.

JENNIFER MacLEOD, Consumer Study Director at Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, Inc.

DR. JAMES G. MILLER, Director, Mental Health Research Institute, University of Michigan.

VANCE PACKARD, author and former editor of Collier's.

DR. KERMIT SCHOOLER, Project Director, Alfred Politz Research, Inc.

DOUGLAS L. SMITH, Director of Merchandising and Advertising, S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc.

DR. ARTHUR H. WILKINS, Chief of Copy-Motivation Research Unit at

DR. H. A. WITKIN, Director, Psychology Laboratory and Associate Professor, Department

Our Greetings to the following companies, for whom we have confirmed reservations to the Package Research Conference. We are looking forward to seeing you there.

American Viscose Corp., Film Division
Armstrong Cork Company
Atlas Supply Company
P. Ballantine & Sons
Best & Co.
Boyle-Midway, Inc., Div. of American Home Products Corp.
Bristol-Myers Company
Burry Biscuit Corporation
Campbell Soup Company
Clairol Incorporated
J. L. Clark Manufacturing Co.
Color Research Institute
Continental Can Company
Cunningham & Walsh, Inc.
D'Arcy Advertising Company
Design Associates Ltd.
Eastman Kodak Co.
Elm Farm Foods Co.
The Gardner Board and Carton Co.
Garrett-Buchanan Co.
General Mills, Inc.
The A. C. Gilbert Company
Goebel Brewing Company
Goold and Tierney Inc.
Grey Advertising Agency
Kerr-McGee Oil Industries, Inc.
Ketchum, MacLeod & Grove, Inc.
Lever Bros. Co.
Thomas J. Lipton, Inc.
Lord Baltimore Press
Lynn Baker, Inc.
J. M. Mathes, Inc.
McCann-Erickson, Inc.
Molson's Brewery Limited (Ontario)
Morey, Humm & Warwick, Inc.
Museum of Modern Art
Pacquin Incorporated
Peck & Peck
Philip Morris, Inc.
R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.
Royal Lace Paper Works
Scott Paper Company
Seabrook Farms Co.
Smith, Hagel & Knudsen, Inc.
Timely Packaging Associates
Young & Rubicam, Inc.

TUESDAY MORNING *May 21*

Package Research:
A New Tool for Management
J. Gordon Lippincott

The Conference Work Plan
Dr. Myron J. Helfgott

Behavioral Science and Packaging
Dr. James G. Miller

The various facets of knowledge accumulated by social scientists in many fields will be shown in their relationship to package research.

Perception Research and Packaging
Dr. H. A. Witkin

Laboratory research on the relationship between human personality and the way in which people perceive the world provides important new clues to packaging effectiveness.

Panel Discussion: Louis Cheskin Albert Kner Sherwood Dodge

TUESDAY LUNCHEON

The Hidden Persuaders
Vance Packard

Vance Packard, whose book "The Hidden Persuaders" will be published this spring by David McKay, will discuss the unseen factors that influence consumer purchase decisions—the motivational forces at work.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

The Package As A Symbol
Barbara Kaye

The emotional implications of the package BRANDMARK in stimulating consumer response.

Experimental Methods in Package Research
Dr. Arthur Wilkins

The experimental methods available in research and testing, and means for their validation.

Panel Discussion: Dr. Kermit Schooler A. W. Harding Dr. Thomas E. Coffin

WEDNESDAY MORNING *May 22*

Motivation Research in Packaging
Dr. Ernest Dichter

Case histories showing the use of motivation research in package design and advertising.

Predicting Package Success
Robert F. Elrick

Researching consumer response to proposed new package designs. Given a choice of several good design opportunities, how do you select the best?

Panel Discussion:
Jennifer Macleod
Dr. Herbert Fisher
Douglas L. Smith

WEDNESDAY LUNCHEON

Packaging For a Changing Market
Arno H. Johnson

The next ten years will see an unprecedented battle between new brands and new products vs. the entrenched brands of today. A forecast of trends significant to those who market packaged merchandise.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

Where Package Research Stands Today
Dr. Myron J. Helfgott

A summary of the conference and a frame of reference for the panel discussion.

Panel Discussion:

Program participants lead in a review of conference findings, with entire conference membership.

Award Presentation:
Walter P. Margulies

Presentation of the "Package Research '57 Award"—the first annual presentation by the conference to an individual for outstanding achievement in original research related to packaging.